Maheu tells of plan to kill Castro

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Robert A. Maheu, a former aide to billionaire Howard Hughes, described in detail Wednesday his role in a Central Intelligence Agency scheme to poison Cuban Premier Fidel Castro but insisted that the order to carry out the plot never was given.

The plan, which was timed to coincide with the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, was "always subject to a go signal, which to my knowledge never came," Maheu told reporters.

In other developments:

— Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D., released a summary of documents compiled by Castro purporting to outline a total of 24 CIA-inspired assassination plots against Castro and other Cuban leaders. McGovern, who turned over the documents to the Senate intelligence committee, said "I have no way to verify these allegations" of CIA involvement which "are apparently based on confessions and on circumstantial evidence."

— Sen. Frank Church, chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, and vice chairman John Tower announced that the panel has decided "to extend an invitation" to former President Richard M. Nixon to testify on his administrations's policy toward Chile. "We will talk to his lawyers to see if satisfactory arrangements can be made," said Tower, who spoke with Nixon by telephone last weekend. Neither Tower nor Church gave any indication when or where Nixon might testify.

Maheu met with reporters after completing his sworn testimony before the Senate committee.

The plot, in which Maheu acted as a liaison between the CIA and underworld figures John Rosselli and Sam Giancana, has been described previously in various news reports, but Maheu's account reported for the first time that Hughes was aware of the scheme.

Maheu was not able to shed any new light on where in the government authority to draw up plans to kill Castro had originated.

Richard M. Bissell, the former chief of clandestine services for the CIA, was quoted by the Los Angeles Times on Wednesday as saying he personally approved CIA cooperation with the Mafia in the assassination plan and that he believed then-CIA Director Allen W. Dulles received regular reports on the Mafia connection.

According to Maheu's account, he and Rosselli went to Miami where they met a man named Sam Gold "who subsequently turned out to be Mr. Giancana."